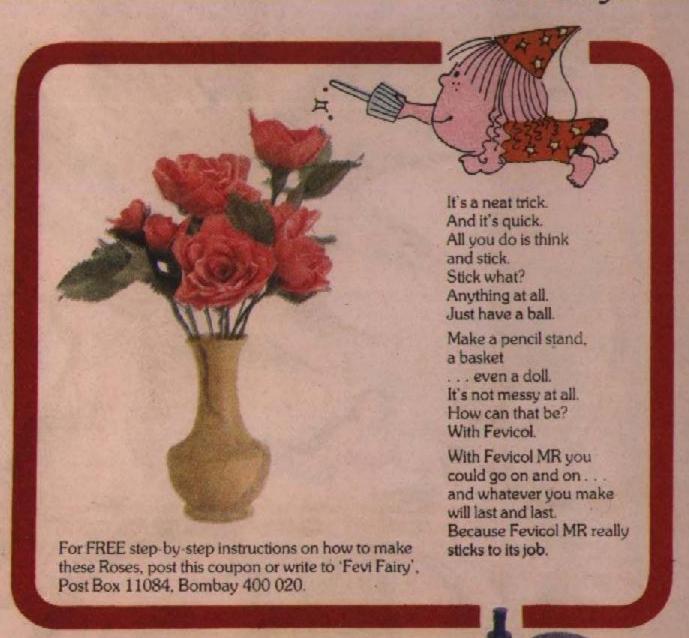


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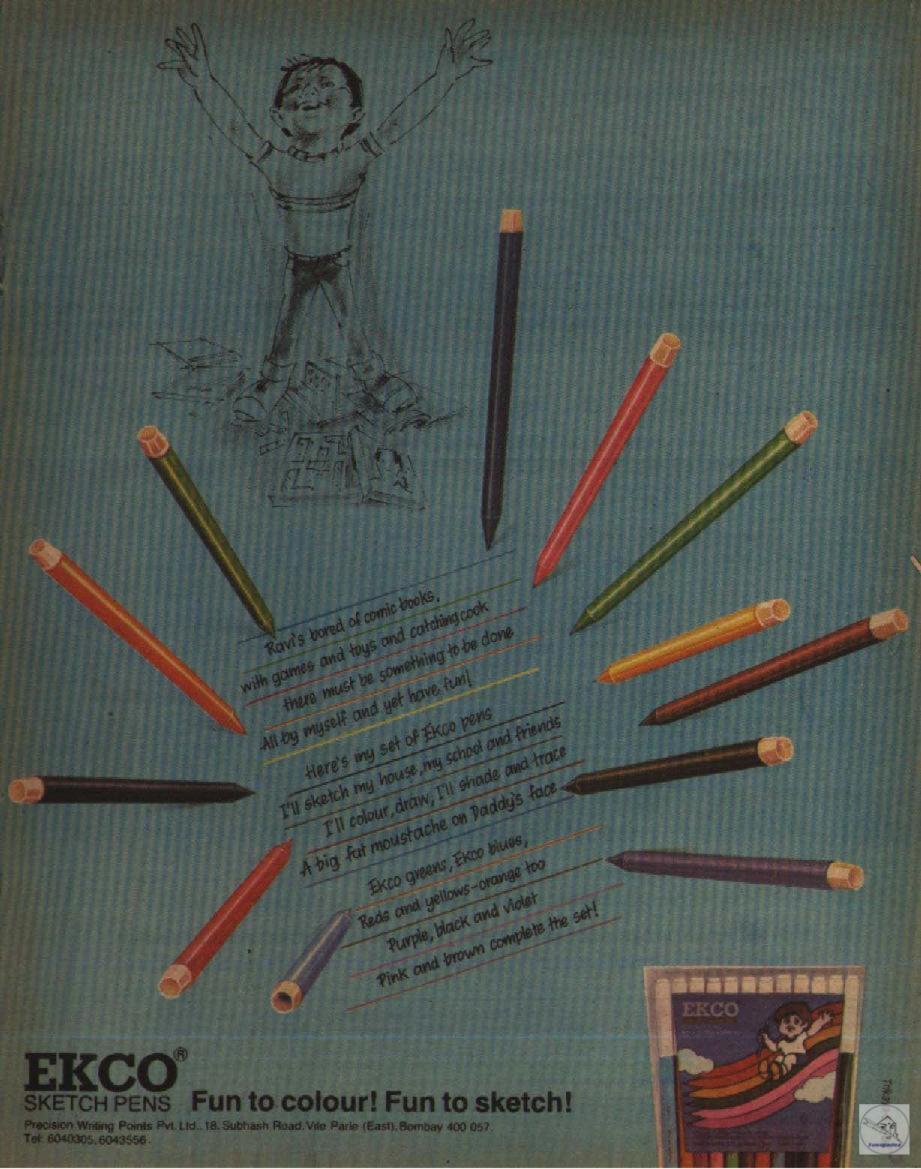


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FEATURES AND FICTION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW





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- \* A pictorial story to make you laugh .

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- \* There are some men of the past who invade our daily life. Who are they?
- \* Revelation in the series, Towards Brighter English.
- \* A bunch of stories and all the regular features.

# GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

प्रवृत्ति च निवृत्ति च जना न विदुरासुराः । न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

Pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ Na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teşu vidyate

Men of demoniac nature know not what is desirable and from what to abstain. In them are found neither purity, nor good conduct nor any regard for truth.

- The Gita

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Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI Founder: CHAKRAPANI

### THE OLDEST ANECDOTE

Some historians of literature say that the seed of short story was hidden in a Greek anecdote. It is a brief verbal encounter between some youngmen who thought themselves very smart and an old village dame. The young men had to gather their wit to realise how fast they had been outsmarted by their victim.

We present this encounter in our feature "Laughs from Many Lands", in this issue.

It is difficult to say whether the old woman gave a retort or she was just innocent. If she was conscious that her reply was a satire, it shows that she was superior in wit to those smart boys. If she was innocent, it only proves that innocence is superior to wit.

Thoughts to be Treasured

That Law which governs all life is God.

-Mahatma Gandhi.



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#### NO SLEEP FOR 40 YEARS

While no normal person can survive a few days of sleeplessness, Tomas Izquierdo of Cuba has lived without a wink of sleep for 40 years. "No case like this has been reported in Medical Literature anywhere in the world," says Dr. Pedro Garcia, Cuba's leading psychiatrist.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND OLD MAN

Britain's oldest man who is 108 (the oldest woman is 112) says that the secret of his old age is simple: he does not drink or smoke and he loves to work.





#### THE CLEVER CREATURES

According to Dr.W.Neid Blair, the former director of the New York zoo, the ten animals known for their memory, understanding and capacity to learn are chimpanzee, orang-utang, elephant, gorilla, dog, horse, sea-lion, bear and cat.

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#### STORY OF



(Rama, Sita and Lakshmana settled down at a charming place, Panchavati, on the Godavari. Demoness Surpanakha was enamoured of Rama and tried to kill Sita. Wounded by Lakshmana, the demoness ran to her brother Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka. Ravana despatched Maricha to trick Rama away from Sita. Maricha took the form of a golden deer and as Rama pursued it and shot an arrow at it. it cried out for Sita and Lakshmana, assuming Rama's voice.)

#### KIDNAPPED!

The voice startled Sita. In no time her surprise changed into an acute anxiety. "Lakshmana! Didn't you hear your brother's call? How do you continue to stand still? Surely, he is in danger. Should you not rush to his rescue?" she demanded of the dutiful prince standing

guard on her.

"First of all, my brother has instructed me not to go anywhere leaving you alone. I should not withdraw from my duty without his permission. Secondly, I refuse to believe that the voice we just now heard was Rama's. Who is there in all







the three spheres to scare him to shout like this? I'm afraid, this is a treacherous act of some demon," Lakshmana said firmly.

But Sita was in no mood to see sense in his words. "Lakshmana, I never knew that you were your brother's foe! Is it your lust for the throne of Ayodhya that checks you from rushing to Rama's rescue? I will go mad, Lakshmana, or die, if you do not respond to his call!" said Sita, her voice sharp and bitter in anguish.

Lakshmana realised that the wise and intelligent Sita was not her own self at the moment. At the same time, he found it

difficult to tolerate her words. "All right," he said, drawing three lines with the edge of his bow in front of the hut. "At least be good enough to abide by my counsel; do not step beyond these lines." In great anguish he then began running in the direction from which the call had come.

He had just disappeared behind the dense clumps of trees when Sita heard a laughter. Her mind did not record it immediately as all her thoughts were with Rama.

But the laughter grew louder and it was followed by a courteous address and pleading for alms. Sita turned back to see a bearded mendicant extending his palms.

A pious household never turned down a beggar. "Wait a moment. My husband and his brother should be back soon. They will receive you properly and talk to you," Sita told the visitor humbly.

But the visitor was growing impatient. He must have alms and depart immediately. His look, his laughter and the manner of his speech were uncomfortable, but Sita did not wish to disappoint him. Also, to give



him alms would mean getting rid of him.

She brought some fruits she had in her hut and advanced to hand them over to the stranger. Craftily the stranger stepped back a little. Indeed, mustering all her devotion and sincerity, Lakshmana had imparted a certain power to the lines he had drawn. Sita was safe as long as she had not crossed them. But Sita did not know when she had stepped beyond them.

The treacherous stranger acted at lightning speed. He caught hold of Sita by her hand and hair and dragged her towards his magic chariot that was at hand, invisible till then.

"I'm Ravana, the monarch of Lanka and the King of the demons. Gods are scared of me. I've a number of beautiful wives, but compared to you, they are nothing but shadows! You'll be my chief queen, my only love," Ravana announced with great enthusiasm.

"Shut up, you fool!" shouted Sita in anger even when she struggled to free herself from the demon's iron grip. "How dare you dream of plucking a lion's teeth? Your desire is no wiser than that of a fellow



wishing to lick the razor's edge or to brush his eyes with a needle! Just as a fly who eats ghee dies, your desire on me will only bring forth your doom."

Ravana was annoyed. At once he assumed his ghastly form-marked by ten heads, twenty arms, blue skin and red clothes. He threw Sita into the chariot. At his command the chariot rose high.

Sita who had swooned away for a moment at the sight of the demon's abominable figure, shouted for Rama and Lakshmana. She appealed to the trees and the river and the animals and birds to free her





from the demon's clutch.

The one to respond to her appeal was a majestic bird, Jotayu, who was half-asleep in a huge tree. He took to his wings and confronted Ravana in his flying chariot. "What are you doing? Are you aware of the sinful nature of your action?" he told Ravana.

Ravana laughed derisively at Jotayu's warning and continued in his flight. When the great bird realised that his words had fallen on deaf ears, he swooped down on the chariot and began tearing it to shreds.

Ravana landed his chariot and came out of it, swords in hands, heaping abuse at the noble bird. Jotayu attacked him with great fury. "I will not let you carry out your nefarious plan, even if that means my death!" he declared.

Jotayu gave Ravana a trying time wounding him with his powerful wings, claws and beak. Even he succeeded in cutting down a few of his ten arms, but that hardly deterred the demon, for new arms sprouted at once in place of the demolished ones.

But, after all, Jotayu was old and Ravana fought with twenty hands wielding dazzling swords. The demon succeeded in clipping Jotayu's wings which had spanned the sky for thousands of years. The bird fell dying. The bleeding demon took off once again with the weeping Sita in his damaged chariot.

-To Continue

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#### THE ASTROLOGER'S FATE

The six year old prince had fallen ill. The anxious king summoned many a physician. They were unable to diagnose the disease from which the prince suffered, what to speak of curing him!

The queen wanted to consult an astrologer. But the king did

not agree to it.

Two weeks later the prince recovered from his illness. No physician knew how. Everyone rejoiced, but the queen. In fact, she became sadder than before. No one knew why. The king tried to find out the cause. But to all his queries, the queen would shed drops of tears.

Weeks passed. The year was coming to an end. The queen's grief was more.

On the New Year's Eve the queen became restless. She didn't allow her son to go out of the room even for a minute. She requested the king to remain with them. The king felt puzzled.

A few minutes before the







stroke of twelve the prince woke up from his sleep and asked for a cup of water. The prince sipped the water. By the time he finished the cup the clock struck twelve.

The New Year had arrived. The king smiled and opened his mouth to wish the queen and the prince a Happy New Year. But the words got stuck up in his throat when he saw the prince who looked unbelievably pale. Soon the prince breathed his last.

"The astrologer's words came true!" cried the queen, beating her breast.

"What?" screamed the king.

"What had the astrologer said?"

"The birth of the New Year will spell death for the prince," she quoted the astrologer amidst her wailings.

"Down with the astrologer!"

yelled the king.

All the king's anger fell on the astrologer—whoever he might be.

No sooner had the king resumed his office after the days of mourning than he summoned the astrologer to the court.

The astrologer came with great expectations. His very sight infuriated the king.

"You predicted the death of my son. Can you predict your own death?" the king asked.

The astrologer, sensing danger, began to shiver. He found no words. His silence infuriated the king further.

"Speak up! Since you can predict others' death, why can't you predict yours?" thundered the king. His plan was to kill the astrologer on the spot and thereby give lie to his prediction of his own death.

"Your Majesty!" said the astrologer after a while, "So far I was casting the dice and working on the chart only for predicting others' future. I do not know



anything about my own fate. Allow me two days' time. I'll be able to give you an accurate answer."

The king granted his request. The astrologer went back home. The king's sword loomed larger before his mind's eye.

Meanwhile the king gathered that the astrologer was greatly trusted by his subjects.

"I'll prove that he was a liar," the king mumbled to himself. "My son's death was a mere co-incidence."

The astrologer arrived at the court on the appointed day.

"When are you expected to die?" asked the king, his hand on the hilt of his sword.

Your Majesty! I am really surprised at what I found. I calculated thrice and all the time the same answer came," the astrologer said.

"What is that answer?" asked the curious king.

"My death is linked to yours, Your Majesty. It is indeed a great surprise to me," said the astrologer. "I did not dare to proceed further and hit upon the exact date. It is unwise to pronounce. Your Majesty's death, for that is bound to



create many problems. The enemies of our kingdom may become gleeful and plan an attack! Your Majesty! You are to die exactly on the third day after my death," said the astrologer calmly.

The king sat stunned. What if the astrologer is correct? Fear of death gripped his heart.

Instead of killing the astrologer, he made him a courtier. He wanted the astrologer to remain healthy and happy so that the fellow did not die easily. The astrologer's long life meant his own long life!

-Retold by P. Raja





Do you know? Our Namdev—the young devotee Namdev—talks with the Lord. Indeed, the Lord plays with him inside the temple when no one else is around. A few blessed devotees have heard their giggle and have stolen glimpses of the divine scene!" said a man to his friend. This became the talk of Pandaripur, the seat of Lord Vithal or Panduranga, in Maharashtra.

And it was as they said. Namdev, in his simple faith that the Lord would of course respond to his appeals, made him respond!

Once his secret had leaked

LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

## THE TWO STONE WALLS

out, the people viewed him with awe. "What a lucky lad Namdev is!" they said. Even elderly devotees stooped to touch his feet.

Namdev became elated.

One night there was a congregation of devotees at the residence of Gorakumar, a potter by profession, but a great devotee of the Lord. The small gathering included a little girl named Muktabai. Though a mere child, she was an enlightened soul.

"What is this uncle?" she asked Gorakumar, pointing her finger at a certain object.

"This is something by which we test the pots. We ascertain whether the earth used is baked well or not!" replied Gorakumar.

The question gave Gorakumar a touch of ecstasy. He lifted the object and began touching the heads of the devotees with it, pronouncing, "Well-baked, well-baked!" When he came to Namdey, almost everyone



shouted, "You need not test him. He is the best-baked stuff!"

But, surprisingly, Gorakumar was heard to say, "This is rather raw!"

All laughed in disbelief. But Namdev knew that Gorakumar did not mean to amuse the others at his cost. Gorakumar was in a state of trance. Whatever he uttered then had truth in it.

Namdev straight went into the temple of Vithal and wept. "I was so proud of my intimate relationship with you. How did the great devotee pronounce me as raw?" "It is because of that pride, my friend! And, you saw the Lord only in this image, not anywhere else. The stone wall between this image of mine and the rest of the world must be broken. Why don't you find out a guru who can guide you properly?" asked Lord Vithal.

"Where to find one?"

"Go into the forest. He is waiting for you in a deserted temple!"

Namdev went into the forest forthwith. He located the deserted temple too. In fact, he could hear a faint voice calling by his name.

He stepped into the shrine.



There lay an old man whose feet rested close to the Symbol of Siva!

"This ignorant man, who does not know how to show reverence to the Lord, cannot be my guru!" thought Namdev. "I must look for him in some other temple!"

"You took such a long time to find me, Namdev! I am old, so old that I cannot even remove my feet. Now, my child, will you please shift my feet to another spot? Take care to see that they do not come in contact with the sacred Sivalinga once again!" said the old man.

Now Namdev was left in no doubt about his having come to the right man. He lifted the old sage's feet. But, wherever he looked—wherever he would like to lay the sage's feet, there he saw the Symbol of Siva!

In a minute he realised that there was no spot that was devoid of the Divine. The old man who had realised this, was free from the rules which should govern the lives of the ordinary people.

The second stone wall in Namdev's mind—the wall of prejudices and stock-ideas was gone in an instant. He prostrated himself to the sage.





#### CHARACTERS FROM CLASSICS

# WHY HIS LEFT EYE WEPT!

The King of Ratna Nagar, Mayurdhwaja, decided to perform a Yajna. He sent his son Tamradhwaja with a horse. The yajna was to be performed after the horse returned wandering through all the kingdoms. If anybody stopped the horse, Tamradhwaja and his soldiers were to fight him.

Meanwhile Krishna and Arjuna too were out with Yudhisthira's horse, for Yudhisthira too wished to perform a similar Yajna. Surprisingly the young Tamradhwaja succeeded in snatching Yudhisthira's horse from the custody

of Krishna and Arjuna.

Krishna and Arjuna, disguised as Brahmins, reached the court of King Mayurdhwaja. Said Krishna, "A lion carried away my son while we were crossing the forest. In response to my request to release my son, it said that it will do so only if it got half of your body!"

The king was ready to sacrifice half of his body for the sake of the stranger's son. The queen stepped forward and said, "A wife is Ardhangini or half of her husband's body. Hence, take me instead of the half of the

king's own body!"

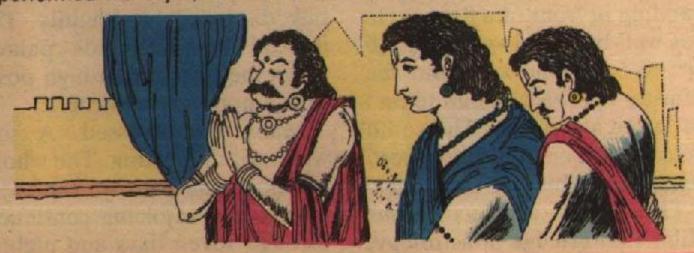
"You are your husband's left half. The lion demands his right half!" replied Krishna.

The king said, "Take my right half and get back your son."

But Krishna noticed a drop of tear in the king's left eye. "I cannot deprive you of half of your body since you are weeping over it!" commented Krishna.

"O Brahmin," explained the king, "the tear you see has a different meaning. My left eye is weeping because the left part of my body is deprived of the chance to sacrifice itself for a noble cause!"

At this Krishna at once embraced the king and revealed to him who he and his companion were. The king was overwhelmed with joy. After he had performed his Yajna, he led Yudhisthira's horse to Hastinapura himself.







A legend about the greatest astrologer of ancient India

#### THE FATEFUL SUNSET

Bharat, the King of Swarnadesh, was an extremely just king. In order to find out the living conditions of his people, he would don a disguise, mingle with them and learn about their problems and their happiness.

One day, out on one of their rounds disguised as merchants, the king and his minister reached a faraway village. They saw a young man of twenty standing in front of a house. He was well-built and was quite tall for his age. The king and the minister approached him to find out more about him. The youth welcomed them and introduced himself as Mihir, the astrologer.

The king, curious about Mihir's knowledge of astrology,

said, "We are merchants. Tell me, will our mission in this village be successful? Could you also suggest an auspicious date for bringing in our shipment?"

"I see that you are dressed as merchants but I am sure that you are warriors. You seem to me to be very eminent people. You could be the king and this man your minister," said Mihir.

The king and the minister were astonished. The king happily disclosed his identity. He invited Mihir to his palace where he gave him a high position among the courtiers.

Many years passed. A son was born to the king. The whole kingdom was overjoyed and festivities and rejoicing continued through seven days and nights.



All the astrologers of the kingdom were summoned and given the task of making the prince's horoscope. Each astrologer, consulting his own trusted books, made the horoscope to the best of his ability. When each and every astrologer had completed the horoscope, a meeting of all the courtiers was called. All the astrologers, except Mihir, were of the same opinion: "Sir, our prince's horoscope indicates a brilliant future. Every star seems to point to this conclusion. But, at the age of twenty, there is a grave danger to the prince's life. This difficulty, however, will be easily surmounted." All except Mihir alone stood silent.

When the king asked Mihir's opinion, he replied in a sad voice, "Just as the sun will set at the approach of the first full moon after the prince's twentieth birthday, he shall become victim to a wild boar. And no strength on earth can save him." A stunned silence followed this horrible prediction and slowly the court broke up.

The prince grew up. From childhood he attained adolescence. The king, however, ex-



perienced no joy seeing his son grow up. The older the prince grew, more acute grew the king's anxiety. He could not imagine his son dying at the age of twenty!

The king's faith in Mihir was unshakable. He could believe the sun rising in the west but not Mihir's prediction ever going wrong? Never. He also understood that a mere mortal could never defy fate. Yet, the father's soul cried out to protect the son. And so, a little away from the capital, he had a seven storeyed mansion built. The security arrangement of the mansion was so elaborate that



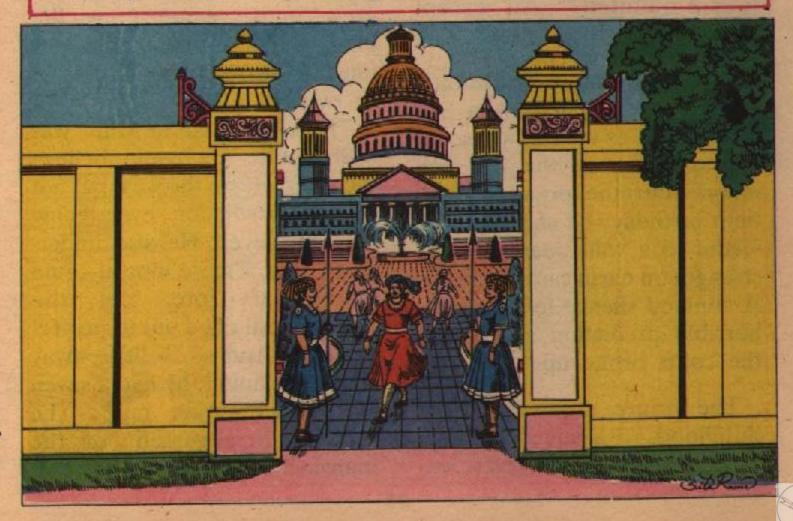
not even a frog could enter it without the guards knowing. It also had all the instruments of education, entertainment and pleasure so that the prince would never have to venture out. The prince was of course forbidden to go into the forest.

Time passed. It was the prince's twentieth birthday. The king now started fidgeting. The guards and the attendants were cautioned to be extremely vigilant. Days went by and soon it was the first full moon after the prince's birthday. Everyone was on his toes. The king had called all the pundits of the kingdom and holy mantras were being

chanted continuously. The sun began reclining in the horizon. The whole kingdom became tense.

The king started for the prince's mansion with his retinue of pundits, astrologers and courtiers, looking at the setting sun again and again.

"The prince is absolutely safe," attendants coming every two minutes from the mansion would inform the king. The tension was quietly and gradually loosening its grip on the people. Everybody began to look at Mihir with contempt. A doubt began to creep even into the king's mind, who had such



faith in Mihir. The king along with his retinue reached the mansion. The sun had just set.

"The prince is quietly resting in his chamber," the king was told. The king was relieved that the danger had passed and was angry at Mihir for having caused so much trouble, anxiety and alarm.

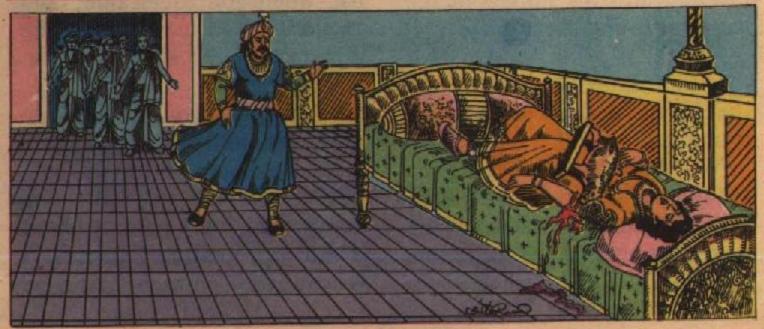
"Thank God, Mihir, you have been proved wrong after all!" remarked the king and he stopped at the gate of the mansion.

"Let's not stop here, my lord. Half an hour back, the prince started his journey with the Lord of Death," declared Mihir gravely.

There was a clamour and everyone rushed towards the prince's chamber. They saw the prince lying in his bed, blood drifting out of his chest, which was pierced through by a heavy statue of a wild boar. The king cried out and broke down. After long moments had diluted his shock, he said, "This statue represents the god of our lineage. The architect was asked to afix it on the pillar beside the bed. Could be, that in a moment of levity and naughty defiance, the prince tried to pull it out and it fell on him, crushing him under its weight? This statue being the cause of his death shows that he has joined the long line of my ancestors. It is true, none can defy fate."

Later, the king clasped Mihir. Because of his brilliance he was given the highest honour among the courtiers. He was called

Varahamihir.







Kanakdas lived in Bharatpur. One day, as he was returning home through the jungles after having visited some relatives in a nearby town, he saw a man running in his direction. The man seemed to be in a hurry. His movements looked suspicious as if someone was following him. Kanakdas quickly hid behind a tree. The man was carrying a big bag. He ran to a nearby tree and swiftly threw the bag into the hollow of the tree-trunk and disappeared.

Kanakdas understood at once that the fellow was a thief and that he had hidden some stolen

property.

"My luck seems to be good today," said Kanakdas to himself. "I shall be the owner of the hidden property. Who knows what spoils and riches there might be inside it!"

Kanakdas was about to step out of his hiding when he saw Devi Dayal, his neighbour, walking in his direction. While Kanakdas was silently cursing Devi Dayal, a third man ran up to the hollow, took out the bag and vanished.

"See what you have done," said Kanakdas angrily to Devi Dayal. "You have brought me bad luck. I was going to get that bag when you came along and spoiled my chances. It is all the influence of the ill star Saturn, you know!"

"What are you talking about?" rebuffed Devi Dayal with matching anger, "I also saw that thief throw the bag into that hollow and I was going to have it! But you spoilt my chances. It is you who brought me bad



luck!" He said after a pause, "it seems that the god of fate favoured the other man over us. I'm afraid, I too am under the influence of Saturn."

Cursing each other so, they continued their journey towards their town. Suddenly they heard a commotion ahead and recognized the man who had got away with the bag. He was being dragged between two guards and his hands were bound tightly by strong ropes.

Pretending to know nothing, Kanakdas asked the guards, "What is the matter? Who is this man and why have you arrested him?" One of the guards replied, "He is a thief. Last night, he stole a lot of money and jewellery from the Zamindar's house. We caught him with the stolen property. In fact sepoys are guarding all the entry or exit points to the forest. This chap pleads innocence. What a fool!"

Devi Dayal was about to say something when the man cried out, "Please Sir, believe me, I am innocent. I was collecting honey from a comb high up on a tree when I saw a man rush to a tree and throw this bag in its hollow. Yes, I agree, I was tempted. I rushed to the tree as soon as the man had left,



snatched the bag out of the hollow and started for home. That's when you caught me. I am not the thief."

"Shut up, you rascal," shouted one of the guards. "A word more and we shall thrash you. I now realise that you have an accomplice. If you do not help us to catch him, we shall beat you to pulp." Terrified, the man shut up at once.

Devi Dayal and Kanakdas gaped on in shocked silence. They had narrowly escaped a similar fate. When the guards left with the prisoner, Kanakdas turned to Devi Dayal and, with a sigh of relief, said, "What you brought me is not bad luck, but good luck."

"I think you did the same to me! We must agree that the Saturn's influence is beneficent, not evil as we wrongly believe."

"Had the man on the tree seen us," said Kanakdas, "he too would not have dared to take the bag. And he would have cursed us for bringing him bad luck. But he would have been saved from all harassment. It is not easy to say what is good luck and what is bad luck."

"The man who actually stole the jewellery and the money also turned out to be fortunate and escaped punishment. Indeed, strange are the ways of fate," added Devi Dayal.

"But you can never tell what awaits him!" said Kanakdas.

And so talking, they reached their homes, happy at having been saved by the influence of the planet Saturn!







Young Chandradev had recently been crowned the king. Never in his wildest dreams had he imagined himself seated on the throne. It happened like this. The King of Champanagar suddenly died. His only son had died a few days previous to him while hunting in the jungles. The kingdom was left without an heir. Chandradev being a distant nephew to the king, was crowned the new monarch.

A prince is born and brought up to the ways and customs of court life. He is accustomed to the attention showered on him by his subjects. He knows whom to trust and of whom to be cautious. But Chandradev lacked the background. The throne had made him heady with pleasure. And everyone who praised

him was lavishly rewarded.

One day, while the king relaxed in the garden talking to his minister, the guard came and said, "A pundit from the kingdom of Vatsya wants to see you, my Lord."

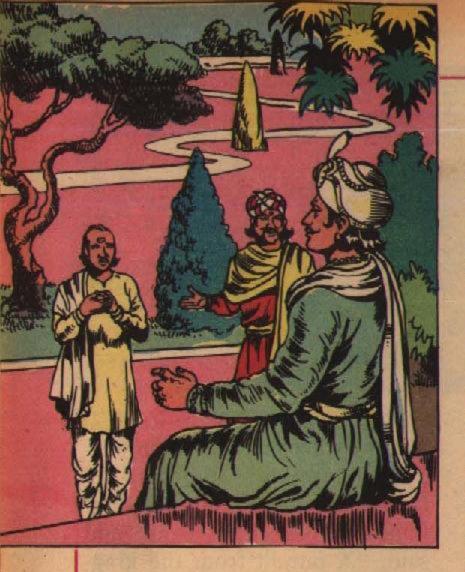
"Show him here," said Chandradev. The visitor was ushered in and in a flowing voice began singing praises for the king. Chandradev's face glowed with happiness.

The kingdom of Vatsya was small compared to Champa-nagar.

"Are the poets and the pundits well respected in your kingdom?" asked the king proudly. "And like us does your king bestow on them money or jewels?"

"My Lord, your generosity is beyond comparison. Can the





sun be compared to the moon or the lotus to the wild flower or the sea to the pond? Neither can thou be compared to any other king," said the visitor enthusiastically.

The king flushed red and with excited fingers started taking out his gold necklace. But the minister, while pretending to shoo away a cockroach from the king's shoulder, whispered in his ear, "wait, my Lord, wait." The king put his necklace back in place.

The minister turned to the visitor, "Pundit Ramsharma of your court is my friend. When I had been to the court of Vatsya

ten years ago Ramsharma was working on a poem depicting Bharata's character. I've heard he finished it in good time and became very popular. Have you read the poem? How does it read?"

"You ask me if I've read it! As a matter of fact I revised and edited it at his request. It is quite good. The king rewarded him well," said the visitor.

"I'm happy to learn about it. You are indeed a good friend of Ramsharma. That you are the editor of his great work is special news to us. You are truly worthy of our deep respect. I hope you will be with us for a few days," said the minister.

"Certainly," said the visitor joyously, "If that is your wish, why shouldn't I stay? I consider myself fortunate to be the guest of the noble King of Champanagar."

King Chandradev called the guard and asked him to lead the pundit to the guest house.

"Ask the caretaker to take special care of our guest. Prepare his favourite dishes and see to it that he lacks nothing."

"As you wish, my Lord." The guard bowed.

The pundit was about to fol-



low the guard when the minister said, "I'd thought I wouldn't get another chance to meet my friend, Pundit Ramsharma. But I have just received the good news that he's going to be my guest tomorrow. He'll be stopping here for a day on his way to Varanasi. How happy he will be to meet you! I shall arrange a scholarly debate between you two in the court!"

"That will be exciting," said the king.

The visitor didn't say a word but went out hurriedly with the guard.

"Why did you stop me from giving the great man a gift?" asked Chandradev.

"He is a fraud, my Lord. He claims to have corrected Pundit Ramsharma's poem. But there is no such pundit named Ram-

sharma. He's a ficticious character I made up in order to test this man. This visitor who claimed to be a pundit had come prepared just with an eulogy."

"Really? He should be punished," said the king.

"My Lord, it would be better if you are more careful. He introduced himself as a pundit from the kingdom of Vatsya and criticised his own king. And you were going to give him your necklace. If a pundit from our kingdom were to do the same, wouldn't it be a blow to your respect? Even if this visitor was truly a pundit from Vatsya, he shouldn't have spoken belittling his king."

"That's right," nodded the

king gravely.

Later it was found that the visitor had fled from the guest house that very night.



Folktales tell why

## WHY IS A DOG'S MUZZLE ALWAYS COLD?

Once upon a time there lived a farmer in a small village. He had three children a girl and two boys. The children had a dog for their pet, but their father did not know about it. When he came to know of it after some weeks, he was not at all happy. But, he had to put up with it because his wife too loved the dog and she took great care of it.

A few months later, a terrible plague struck the village. It claimed the lives of many villagers. Some of them who survived the plague decided to leave that village and to settle down elsewhere. The farmer too decided to leave the village with his family which of course included the dog.

The people were required to travel by boat for a couple of days.

Seeing the dog on the boat, the villagers protested, saying, "When there is no place for human beings, how can you think of bringing an animal



along? Leave it behind." But, the farmer's wife said, "Unless the dog goes with me I am not leaving this village." The farmer was in a fix. However, with sweet words he managed to pacify the villagers and took the

dog along.

As night approached, the villagers made room for themselves to sleep. But the dog remained awake and alert. It went around the boat and never ceased to be vigilant. Suddenly, it saw a small hole at the bottom of the boat through which water was seeping into the boat. It thought, "If I leave the hole as it is, it will result in the boat sinking. These poor people are tired and they are fast asleep. Let me try to save the people and the boat." It sat close to the hole and thrust its muzzle into it thereby stopping the water from

entering the boat. Now and then it took out its muzzle, took a long breath and again pushed it into the hole.

It carried on like this throughout the night.

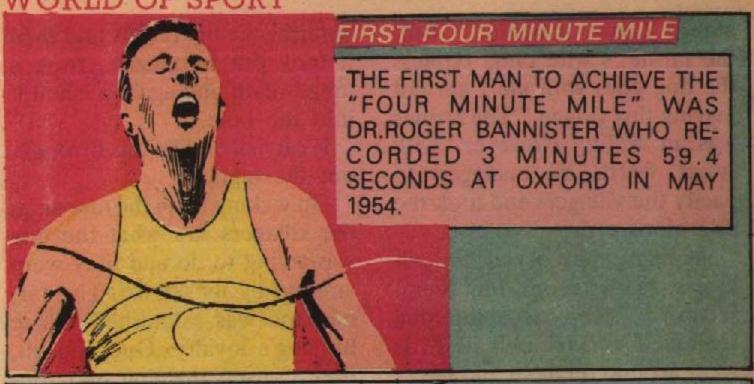
On waking up in the morning, the villagers saw what the dog was trying to do and they were amazed by its service. The farmer too was astonished to see his dog's loyalty. One and all, they praised the dog and fondled it for having saved their lives.

The villagers reached safely the other shore and settled down in a beautiful green valley. But they never forgot the timely action by the dog.

The dog saved the villagers with its heroic act, but since then it suffered a bad cold. And till today a dog's muzzle is so cold! Retold by Sunanda Reddy



#### WORLD OF SPORT



## 'SPHAIRISTIKE'

LAWN TENNIS WAS
ONCE CALLED
"SPHAIRISTIKE" THE
RULES WERE PATENTED
BY MAJOR WALTER
WINGFIELD IN 1874 AND
WERE BASED ON THE
ANCIENT INDOOR GAME
OF 'ROYAL' OR 'COURT'
TENNIS.

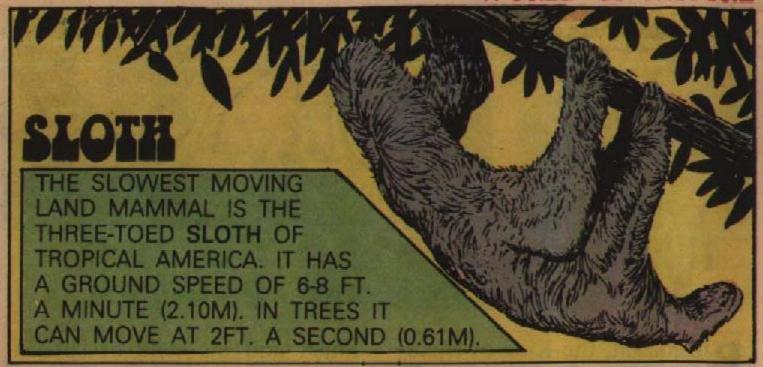




#### **MARATHON HOAX!**

IN THE 1904 OLYMPICS AT ST LOUIS, MARATHONRUNNER FRED LORZ HITCHED A LIFT FOR NINE MILES IN A TRUCK. THE HOAX WAS DISCOVERED JUST IN TIME.



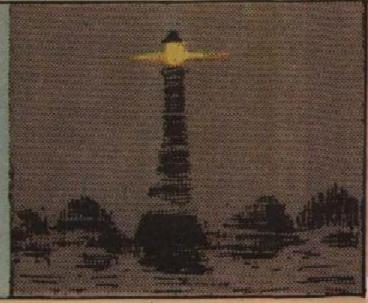




## Oldest Flowering Plant

THE GINKGO OR MAIDENHAIR TREE IS THE OLDEST KNOWN FLOWERING PLANT IT EXISTED IN CHINA 180,000,000 YEARS AGO.

THE FOGGIEST PLACE IN THE WORLD IS THE GRAND BANKS, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADAWHICH HAS AN AVERAGE OF 120 DAYS OF FOG A YEAR.







Bhismasen, the King of Bhadrawati, was an able and pious ruler. Like his illustrious forefathers, he was kind and courteous on one hand and brave and just on the other hand. His subjects loved him very much.

The king desired that his example should be followed by his successor. He had two sons, Vijay and Vimal. According to the tradition of Bhadrawati any son of the king could be nominated to succeed the king, not necessarily the first-born son. The king did not know whether to choose Vijay or Vimal to succeed him. Although the two young men were different in nature, the king saw some good quality in both. Vijay, the elder prince, always remained calm; he spoke softly and acted with determination. But Vimal was very active. He loved to speak much and his style of speech always charmed people. He had more friends than Vijay had.

"My lord, what is required for ruling a kingdom like ours is dynamism. Prince Vimal has this great quality," one day the minister told the king.

"Yes, my lord, he knows how to win people," said the chief courtier. The king understood that both of them wanted Vimal to be made the crown prince.

The king decided to do as he was advised. However, before announcing his decision, he asked the two princes to tour the kingdom to gather first-hand knowledge of the people and the places. They were required to return in six months. They were asked not to introduce themselves to anybody unless really necessary.

The two princes were happy



to move freely, without bodyguards. Towards the end of their travel, they entered a forest, but did not know how to come out of it. As they took rest under a tree, tired, they suddenly heard a terrified female voice, "Save me!"

They stood up and looked in every direction. No human being was to be seen. "Brother! This must be the voice of some witch. Let's move away," said Vimal.

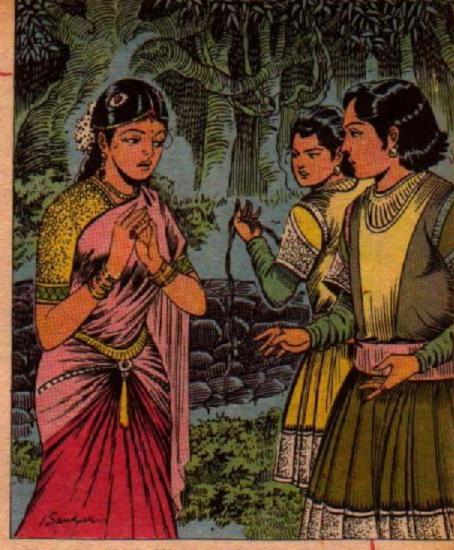
"Nobody is to be seen on the ground, it is true, but there could be a well somewhere and someone might have fallen into it," said Vijay.

Indeed, there was a well. Vijay looked into it and saw the damsel in distress.

"Vimal, fetch that creeper!"
Vijay asked his younger brother.

Vimal ran and promptly prepared a rope out of the creeper. Vijay held one end of the creeper. Vimal descended into the well with the help of the creeper and helped the damsel to come out.

"Who are you?" asked Vijay.
"I am Princess Kusum
Kumari of Sudhapur. I was
playing hide and seek with my



friends. I deliberately ran away from my friends to puzzle them. Unfortunately, I fell into this well."

Then turning towards Vimal, she said, "Thank you for rescuing me."

Vimal, who had been charmed by the beautiful princess, felt delighted.

The next moment the anxious maids of the princess came rushing there. The princess went away with them, casting a smiling glance at the two brothers.

The two brothers returned to their palace and reported their experiences to their father. The king was particularly happy to





hear about their chance-meeting with the princess of Sudhapur.

"Sudhapur has been a friendly kingdom for a long time. I shall be happy if one of you marry Princess Kusum Kumari," said King Bhismasen.

Soon King Bhismasen and his two sons received an invitation from the King of Sudhapur. The messenger clearly hinted that the King of Sudhapur would like his daughter to marry one of the princes of Bhadrawati.

"She wishes to marry me," said Prince Vimal to his pals. "She feels grateful to me because I rescued her."

King Bhismasen and the two

princes reached Sudhapur and were received with great honour. In due course the King of Sudhapur proposed to King Bhismasen that Kusum Kumari be married to one of his sons.

"Surely! Whomsoever she wishes to marry!" said Bhismasen.

The princess came out with a garland. She made her choice clear by garlanding Vijay.

King Bhismasen was surprised. "From what I had gathered, I thought that the princess would choose Vimal!" he told his host.

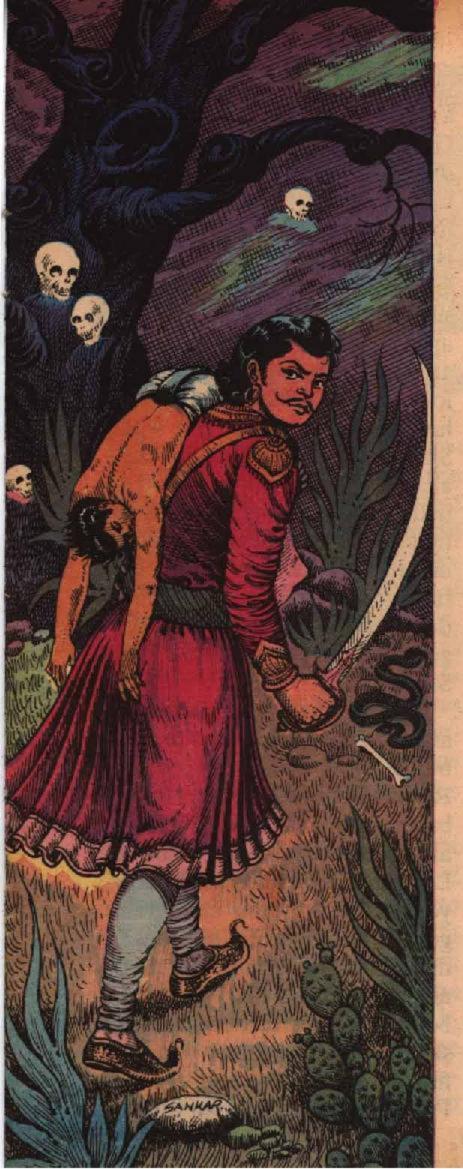
Said the King of Sudhapur, "My daughter was much impressed by Vijay. She was also happy with Vimal, but she believes that Vimal acted according to the instruction of the elder prince."

The princess overheard them. Looking at Vimal, she said, "The moment you came to my rescue, I felt as if Lakshmana was at work under Rama's direction. I began to look upon you as our younger brother!"

Vimal bowed to her.

King Bhismasen now realised who deserved to succeed him. He made Vijay the crown prince.





New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

# WRONG DECISION?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps could be heard the moaning of jackals and the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began to cross the desolate cremation ground, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, are you taking all this pain in order to fulfil a vow that you might have taken? Let me tell you that decisions or vows, taken in the heat of emotions. are not always fulfilled. In fact, some time circumstances force one to go against one's own decision. Let me cite an example. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.





The Vampire went on: A merchant, Ramanand by name, lived in Shivpur. He had two sons-Sudhakar and Dayakar. Now, while Sudhakar was handsome, Dayakar was not. But Dayakar was very intelligent while his elder brother was dull. The boys were quite young when their mother died. Ramanand, unable to bear the shock, fell terribly ill and was bedridden. On Dayakar's young shoulders fell the burden of looking after the business which he managed quite competently. In fact, in a short time he gathered much wealth.

In the same town lived

another merchant named Gunashekhar. He had two daughters-Roma and Shobha. Gunashekhar wanted to marry his daughters to the sons of Ramanand. When Gunashekhar expressed his desire to Ramanand, the latter agreed quite happily. Roma, attracted by Sudhakar's good looks, was delighted to have him as her husband. But when Shobha was told about Dayakar, she adamantly refused to marry him, saying, "He is so ugly!" Dayakar heard her comment. He was both hurt and furious. In a fit of anger he declared that he would marry a girl much more beautiful than Shoba.

A few days later Sudhakar and Roma were married. Ramanand died soon thereafter. Roma realised that the family business was handled by Dayakar. One day she went to Dayakar and said, "Dayakar, you know that you are intelligent while my husband doesn't understand anything of business. I'm afraid that you might be angry with me because my sister refused to marry you. Let me tell you quite frankly that I'm anxious about our future.



"What do you want me to do to allay your fears?" asked Dayakar.

"Well, you can divide the property into two equal parts and give your brother his share," suggested Roma.

"Divide the property? No, that won't be necessary. He can have the whole of it," said Dayakar.

"What about your share?" asked the lady.

"I can earn more than we have," said Dayakar and he was gone.

Little did Roma or anybody realise how hurt Dayakar was at the way of the world. In fact, Dayakar left his home for the unknown that very moment.

Wandering along the whole day, Dayakar reached a forest. He was hungry and the long journey had made him tired. He rested for a while and then started looking around for fruits with which to appease his hunger. Suddenly he saw two men lying under the shade of a tree. As he approached them he noticed that their clothes were torn and their bodies bruised. One of them said, "You have come as our saviour. A gang of dacoits beat us up and ran away

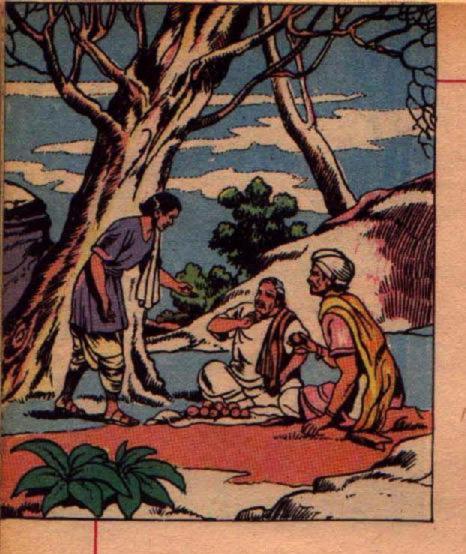


with the valuables we carried. We are famished and feel very weak. We shall be very grateful to you if you could give us something to eat."

Dayakar immediately climbed a tree and plucked a few ripe mangoes. He put them in front of them. He also discovered a spring and fetched water for them in a cup made out of leaves. There was no fruit left for him to eat.

The two men were indeed very hungry. Before they realised it, they had eaten all the fruit, leaving none for Dayakar. Ashamed, they exchanged guilty looks. Dayakar broke in, "It's





all right. I have still strength in me to walk. Don't worry. Now that you are refreshed you can continue with your journey."

One of the men smiled and said, "I am Vijaydas, a merchant of Bijpur. This is my assistant, Kusumakar. If there is any way I can help you, do tell me. I will be very happy if I can do anything for you."

Dayakar was pleasantly surprised. He had heard of Vijaydas—the famous merchant. He narrated his own story.

"I need a trustworthy person to help me in my business. If you are willing, you can come with me. I shall give you a handsome salary," said Vijaydas.

Dayakar agreed and the three set out together for Bijpur. Vijaydas gave him the promised job and Kusumakar gave him shelter in his house.

In a short time Dayakar proved his capacity and helped Vijaydas scale new heights in merchantry. Never before had his trade flourished that well. Delighted with Dayakar, Vijaydas gave him a share in his business. Dayakar became wealthy in no time.

Now, Kusumakar had a daughter called Manorama. She was very beautiful and had set her heart on Dayakar. Vijaydas too had a daughter named Lajwanti. She too liked Dayakar very much. She, however, was not beautiful.

Manorama did not know how to express to Dayakar her desire to marry him. Lajwanti was faced with the same problem. Manorama decided to seek Lajwanti's advice and Lajwanti Manorama's. When they came to know that both of them loved the same person and wanted to marry him, they decided they would go along with Dayakar's wish.



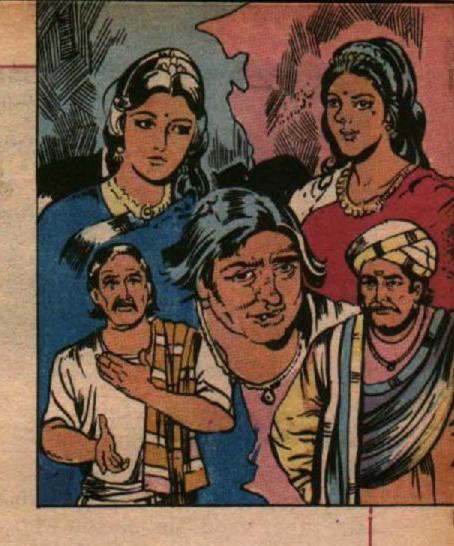
Manorama thought, "I'm much more beautiful than Lajwanti. He cannot refuse me. And then, hasn't he vowed that he would marry a girl much more beautiful than Shobha? Surely that could only be me and certainly not Lajwanti.

Lajwanti thought, "I am much wealthier than Manorama. He cannot refuse me. And then, hasn't he vowed that he would earn more wealth than his brother possesses? He can do this only by marrying me and certainly not Manorama?"

Both the girls disclosed their intentions and decision to their fathers. Both the fathers were pleased with their daughters' decision. Through an elderly gentleman they informed Dayakar about this and sought to know whom he would like to marry.

Dayakar gave his decision in a day. He would marry Lajwanti.

The Vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, tell me, is it not surprising that Dayakar refused the beautiful Manorama and accepted Lajwanti? What could be the mystery behind his strange decision? Agreed, he



could become richer than his brother by marrying Lajwanti, but what about his vow of marrying a girl more beautiful than Shobha? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

Forthwith replied King Vikram: "Dayakar's decision was a noble one. Money was not important to him any longer, for he had already become rich. Dayakar was a noble soul. In the forest when he himself was tired and hungry, he first offered fruits to Vijaydas and Kusumakar. His decision to





marry Lajwanti reflects the same nobility. Manorama's beauty will surely attract any number of suitors for her. On the other hand, the person who would marry Lajwanti, may do so only for her wealth! Dayakar had no attachment to wealth.

Moreover he knew how it felt to be rejected because one was not charming. Therefore he decided to marry Lajwanti."

No sooner had the king concluded the answer than the Vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS









A nant was an orphan. His parents had died when he was still a toddler and he was left all alone in the world. One day, a poor woman called Parvati saw the boy and took him with herself. Parvati would work all day in several households and with the food and money she collected, would feed and clothe Anant. Thus she brought him up with love and care. As Anant began to grow up she sent him to school. After a day's work she would go and stand before a temple and beg of the visitors. The money she collected was spent in educating Anant.

Anant proved himself good at study. He won scholarships and studied further.

When Anant was about twenty, he finished his education. Parvati secured for him a decent job at the zamindar's kachahri easily. It was because she had worked in his house and the zamindar was pleased with her.

At last Parvati's days of hardship came to an end. As Anant was an eligible young man proposals for his marriage started pouring in. Very soon Anant got married to a girl of Parvati's choice, Amla.

One evening Parvati and Amla went to the temple. One shop-keeper told another, "See that woman. She was a beggar till the other day. But how well off she is now!"

Parvati did not mind the comment. She was humble. But Amla drew a long face.

Now Amla was a vain girl. She could not stand Anant paying so much attention and respect to Parvati. She considered Parvati a mere beggar. As soon as Anant would leave for



work, Amla would show a total disregard for the old lady. In the beginning Parvati was hurt and sad but she soon got used to it.

One day, Parvati fell ill.

Anant was worried and he got a
good physician to look after her.

The treatment cost a lot of
money and Amla resented this.

Meanwhile the Ganapathi festival drew near.

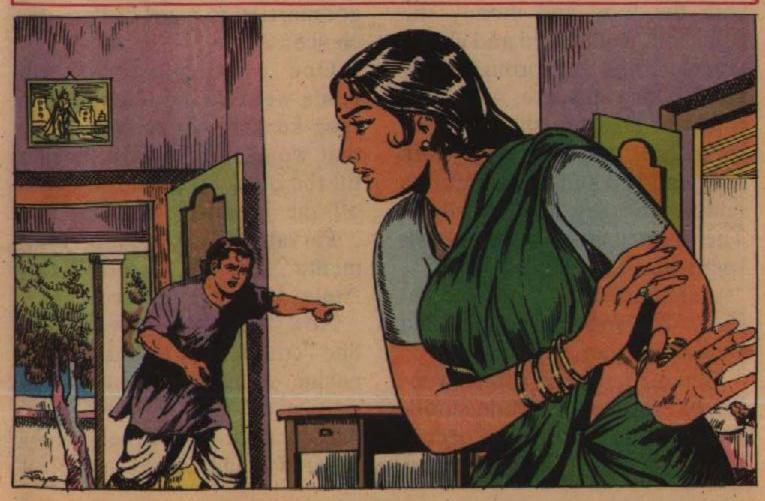
"I want a new saree for the festival," said Amla to Anant.

Anant replied, "Amla, I'm afraid, I can't buy you a saree at the moment. As you know, we need money to cure mother."

"You don't mind spending money on a beggar woman but when I, your wife, ask you for a saree, you play the poor man!" cut in Amla angrily.

Anant commanded her in a cold and angry voice, "Never again shall you refer to mother as beggar." And he walked out of the house.

"Either I stay or that beggar. The choice is yours," shouted Amla from behind. In a furious rage Anant shouted back, "As your husband it is my duty to keep you happy. But then, it is your duty to look after my mother. So don't give me absurd choices. I was an orphan and mother brought me up against a thousand hardships. I





will not desert her. You may go, if you so desire."

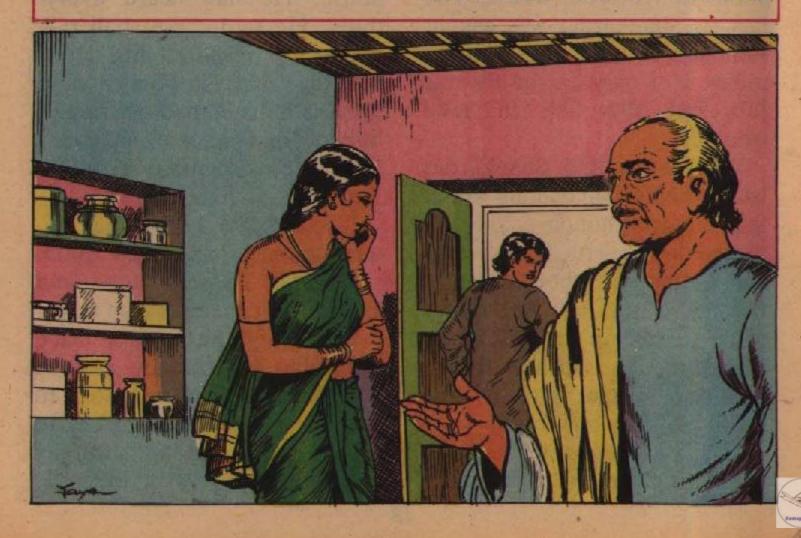
Within an hour Amla left for her father's house. Her father, Shankardas. greeted her and asked, "What's the matter? Why have you come alone?" Amla broke down and narrated her story and finished by declaring, "I shall never go back to that house!"

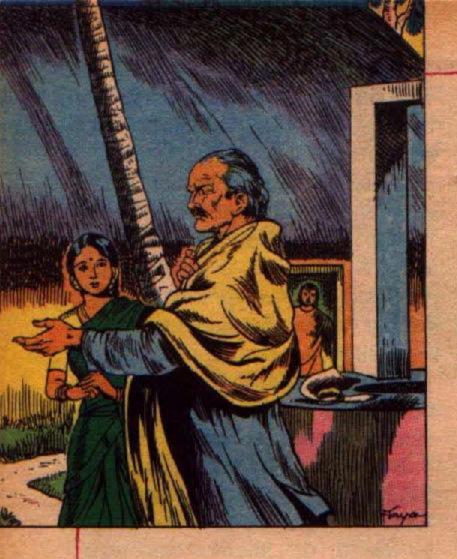
Shankardas remained silent for a while, deep in thought. And then he said, "What you did was very smart. When Anant will understand his duty towards you, his wife, he shall come running to take you back."

Amla felt a rush of relief go through her. She was not quite sure that her father would understand her feelings. But now it was all right. She was rather perturbed, however, at her brother's behaviour. Vinayak had not spoken a word to her since she had arrived.

"I have to rush to the court now," said Shankardas. "I shall come home early today and we shall talk this all over."

But even by late evening Shankardas had not returned. A worried Amla went to Ramdas, a friend of Shankardas who worked with him and enquired about her father. Ramdas





answered in a sad voice, "I was about to visit your house. The fact is, Shankardas was caught red-handed accepting a bribe today. Not only has he lost his job, but also he's in deep trouble."

Amla was jolted. Shankardas had lost his job and along with it the family's honour. She returned home with heavy steps and as she was about to enter the house she saw her father place a letter on the wall in the courtyard. She rushed to his side and caught him by the hand, holding him back.

"I have been disgraced, my daughter. I cannot live here anymore. Let me go," said Shankardas, disengaging his hand.

"No father, you must not leave. Come inside," pleaded Amla, clutching at his hand again.

"How shall we live?" continued Shankardas. "Losing a job at this age and in this manner! I shall never be able to get another job. What shall we eat?"

"Don't worry, father," consoled Amla, "my brother has a good job. Is it not his responsibility to look after you?"

Just then Vinayak entered the house. He had heard everything. He said, "We shall talk about my responsibility later. Tell me, first, do you not find father's behaviour disgusting? I burn with shame everytime I picture him accepting the bribe. Do you not hate him?"

"I can never hate father, do what he may," answered Amla.

Vinayak laughed aloud and said, "You can never hate father even though he took a bribe when he was already earning well. But Parvati is disgusting to you because she used to beg to sustain your husband, simply because she was wretchedly





poor.

You do expect me to look after father, do you not? But Anant should not look after Parvati!"

Amla stood stunned. Tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Do you realise the situation now?" calmly asked her father, patting her on the back.

Amla cried out, "Yes, yes. I shall return to my husband and treat Parvati with respect. Father, your job is no more, but I am sure Vinayak will look

after you."

Now both father and son laughed. "Don't worry, my daughter. Neither have I lost my job nor have I been disgraced. It was all a drama to bring you back to your senses. Vinayak, Ramdas and I were all in it," said the loving father.

Amla smiled with relief and joy. "Thank you, for teaching me this lesson. I had indeed lost my senses," she said and got ready to accompany her brother to Anant's house.

Her smile was not meant to be seen by anyone and served its whole purpose in being smiled.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Perhaps the only true dignity of man is his capacity to despise himself.

George Bernard Shaw



## "Mother" and "Sons"—LAUGHS FROM MANY LANDS

(This is known as the oldest story of the Western World)

One morning the oldest woman in a village of Greece was driving her pigs to the fields. She was frail, but active.





A group of young men saw her. They decided to have a laugh at her expense. "How are you, mother of pigs!" Thus the leader of the group greeted the woman.

"How are you, my sons!" replied the old woman with a twinkle in her eyes. She then quietly continued on her way.





When the young men understood the import of the old woman's report, they hung their heads in shame while some farmers who heard the conversation laughed and laughed.





#### TEMPLES OF INDIA

#### SHRINE OF KAMAKSHI

"I command you to do this in the name of Goddess Kamakshi!" is the refrain of many an incantation of wizards, exorcists and magicians. Since times immemorial Goddess Kamakshi, located on the Nila Hills near the city of Guwahati in Assam, has been popular with the folks as the deity who can grant magic powers to devotees.

Her shrine is believed to have been built on a limb of Sati that had fallen on the hill, when Siva wandered with Her dead body after the Daksha Yajna. The shrine, covered by dense forest was difficult of access for people.





In the 16th century a generalturned brigand named Kalapahar destroyed the temple. His attack was as sudden as his retreat. The local kings could not do anything to protect the temple. For some years it lay almost deserted but for the presence of a priest or two.





Soon after this Malladeva, the Koc King of Assam, led an expedition against the Nawab of Bengal. In the battle, he was defeated and captured. The Nawab threw him into a room in his fort and refused to release him.

One night the king dreamt the Goddess who said, "Is it not a shame that you should have desired to conquer a neighbouring land while the temple of the presiding deity of your own kingdom lies in ruins?"





The king realised his mistake. The deity also told him in his dream how he can find his freedom. In the morning the Nawab's mother, while walking in the garden, was bitten by a snake. She was on the verge of death.



Physicians of the court and the town were summoned. They did their best to save the old lady, but she appeared to be sinking. The Nawab was extremely devoted to his mother. He was very sad.





When the Nawab lost hopes in the physicians, he announced in the court that whoever can cure his mother will be given whatever he wanted. The courtiers were unable to give any hope to the king. They too became sad.

The prisoner king told his guard, "Tell the Nawab that I can save his mother, on condition that he will set me free." The message was conveyed to the Nawab. He agreed to the condition.





The Koc King cured the Nawab's mother by the hymn which Mother Kamakshi had taught him in a dream. He was profusely thanked by the Nawab and given a suitable farewell as if he had been an old friend. The king hurried forth to his kingdom.

Back in his capital, the first thing the Koc King did was to rebuild the temple of Kamakshi—with bricks baked in butter. He arranged for systematic management of the shrine and himself remained a life-long devotee.





The shrine of Goddess Kamakshi is no longer inaccessible. Visitors travel to the place regularly. The temple has a festive atmosphere. No image, but a block of stone represents the deity in the sanctum sanctorum.



#### A DECISION

Sushmita found her father, Raghu Singh, very thoughtful. "What makes you so pensive, father?" she asked.

Raghu Singh smiled. "It concerns you, my child! There are two worthy proposals for your marriage. One from Jampur and the other is from Shrikota. In both the cases the candidates are bright young men. But I don't like the relatives of the Jampur boy. They are corrupt and ill-mannered. So far as the Shrikota boy is concerned, his relatives are honourable people, but his friends are rather bad characters."

Sushmita was about to say something but she kept quiet.

"Have you got any suggestion, child?" asked the father.

"Since you ask me, I must say that one has no hand on the character of one's relatives, but one chooses one's own friends. The kind of friends one has cultivated should speak volumes about his character," said Sushmita politely.

Raghu Singh looked amazed. "You are right, my child! I have arrived at a decision!" he said.







In a certain village there lived two friends. They carried on some business in partnership. They died leaving behind a son each, Fazal and Asal.

THE REST STATES

Fazal was clever. He took over the whole business. The innocent Asal was convinced that because of his father's fault, he was not entitled to any share in the business.

Fazal employed Asal as a servant to look after his fields. Asal did his work dutifully.

It was a moonlit night. After a day's labour Asal sat on the verandah of a hut near Fazal's field, thinking of his own misery. Suddenly he saw a lady in white picking up grains from the field and depositing them in Fazal's granary.

Asal was surprised. He did not know the lady. He sprang up before her and asked her, "Who are you?"

"Since you could see me, I must admit that you are a truthful man. People who are not truthful cannot see me. Well, I'm Fazal's goddess of luck!"

"Can you tell me where is my goddess of luck?" asked Asal.

"I can. She is in the north, waiting for you," said the goddess and she vanished.

At once a woman in black looking wretched appeared and said, "I am your Being of Misery. I've been with you all these days. Don't leave me!"

"Enter this bottle so that it will be easy for me to carry you!" said Asal. The Being of Misery became smaller and smaller and entered the bottle. Asal sealed it and threw it into a pit.



Asal stood up and began walking towards the north. He crossed the hills. In the morning he saw a man labouring alone in a bushy field, digging the earth.

"Sir, you don't look like a labourer. Why don't you let me do the work for you?" asked Asal.

The man looked at Asal and said, "Come on. Dig here. You seem to be honest. I dreamt that there is something buried here. I will let you dig on condition that you give me half of whatever you find."

"I promise to do so," said Asal.

He started digging. Soon he hit upon a chest. He called out to his employer. Together they opened it. It was full of gold pieces. They divided the content between them.

The man went away. Asal too was about to go when he heard a puny voice from under the ground. He dug further and saw another chest. As he opened it, a figure in white emerged from it. "I'm the goddess of your luck," said she. Asal was delighted. He prostrated himself to her. The goddess said that, she will be with him and then



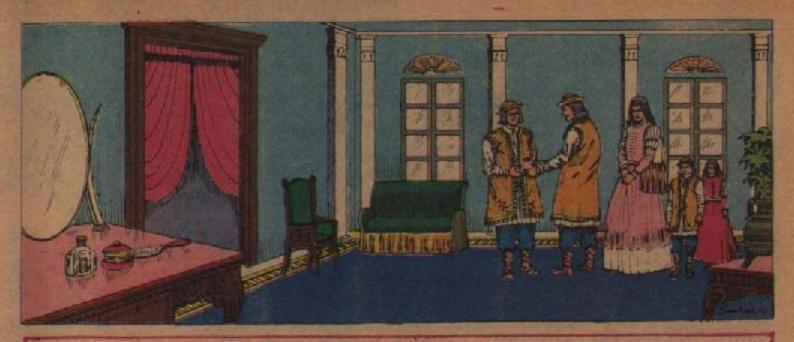
she disappeared.

Asal then went to the nearest town and bought a house. He began some business and prospered fast. He married and lived happily.

One day Fazal came to the town and met Asal. His surprise knew no bounds. "How did you prosper so much?" he asked. Asal took him home and narrated everything frankly.

Fazal was back in his village. Straight he went to the pit near his field and found out the bottle. He opened it. Out came the Being of Misery. "Go to Asal who left you here!" he said.





But the Being smiled and said, "Why should I go to an unkind man when a kind man like you are here? I'll be with you!" She vanished. The very next moment some bandits fell on him and took away some

valuable gifts which Asal had given him. Next day his crops were destroyed by a flood.

Fazal realised his folly. But he had to pay the price for his treachery and envy.

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES







#### DID YOU KNOW?



More than 99.9 per cent of the creatures that have ever lived on earth were extinct before the emergence of man.

The longest-ever trail of a dress was worn by Catherine the Great at her coronation in 1762. Fifty bearers were required to walk behind her, holding this 75 yard-long manifestation of royal luxury.





Forensic scientists can determine a person's sex, age and race by examining a single strand of hair.

Clouds rise higher during the day than at night.





Men laugh louder, longer and more often than women.

There are 10 trillion living cells in the human body.





#### **Towards Better English**

#### ALL ABOUT THE BULL

"Grandpa, we didn't know that familiar animals like the elephant or the horse or even the pig had contributed so much to the enrichment of English vocabulary. Are there more animals who figure in the idioms?" asked Reena.

"So many. Take for example the most familiar one—the bull. Now, bull also means a blunder or an inconsistency in speech. But this has nothing to do with the domestic bulls which are so docile and gentle. Long ago there was an Irish lawyer in London named Obadiah Bull who often made blunders in his speech. Bull in this sense bears his memory," replied Grandpa Chowdhury.

"What a mix up of two bulls!" commented Rajesh.

"A third bull too has a role to play. From the Latin bulla comes the word bull which means a declaration by the Pope, generally known as the Pope's bull. You have no reason to be scared of it as you should be of a bull in a China shop!"

"What is a bull expected to do at that place, Sir?" asked Reena.

"It does not refer to a bull, but a man who acts in an embarrassing manner—lacking in finesse, or even violently, in contrast to the spirit of the setting."

"And who is Mr. John Bull, by the way? I read a headline: "John Bull Retreats". But the news that followed said nothing of any John Bull. It was all about the British delegate, yielding ground to others in a conference," said Reena.

"Naturally, for John Bull is a nickname for the British collectively."

"Is that all about the bull?" asked Rajesh.

"There is Bull's eye which means the centre of a target. Figuratively, to make a bull's eye or to score a bull means to gain something significant in a risky adventure," said Grandpa Chowdhury.







How many of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world can still be found? What happened to those which are not found?

—Leena, Mary, Vasanti and Arundhati, New Delhi.

Of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world only one is to be found today—the Egyptian Pyramid.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon disappeared probably due to lack of

regular attention.

The Statue of Zeus at Olympic was destroyed by fire.

The temple of Ephesus (Turkey) was destroyed by Goths.

Ruins of the tomb of Haliarnassus (Turkey), can still be seen.

The Statue of Apollo (The Colossus of Rhodes) was destroyed by earthquake.

The Light House of Pharos (Egypt) too was destroyed by earthquakes.

Is it true that English, Dutch and some other European languages grew from an older form of German?

—V.V. Ramachandran, Bombay

Most of these languages owe their origin to a speech which a neolithic people wandering between the Rhine and the Aral sea used. That was more than five thousand years ago. This language is popularly known as the Indo-European or Indo-Germanic or Aryan language.

A branch of this language, known as Teutonic or Primitive Germanic, is the

mother of English and a number of other languages.





## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S.B. Presad



M. Natarajan

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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Station Thota Nuzvid-521 201
The Winning Entry:— Innocent Creature & Indolent Nature

#### PICKS FROM THE WISE

Short as life is, we make it still shorter by the careless waste of time.

-Victor Hugo

After the event even the fool is wise.

-Homer

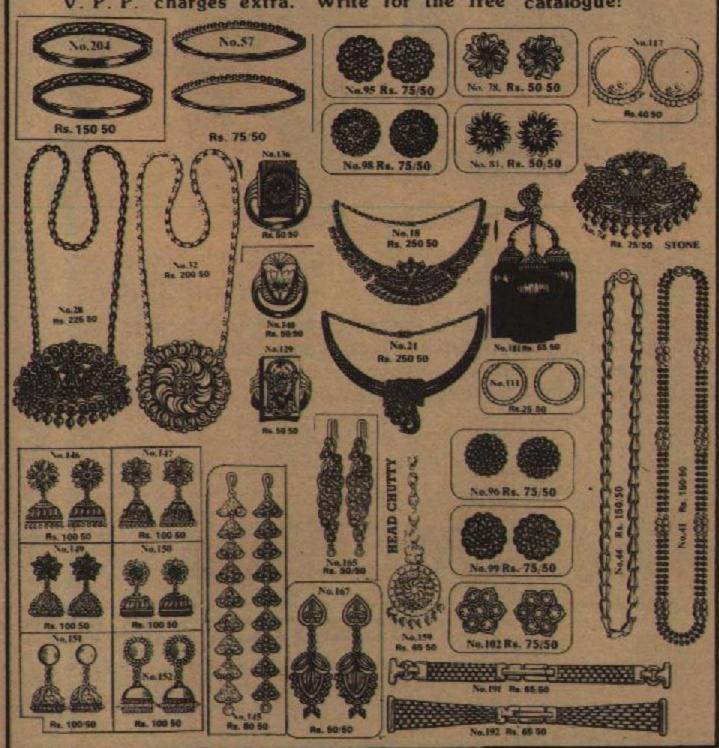
It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.

—James Thurber



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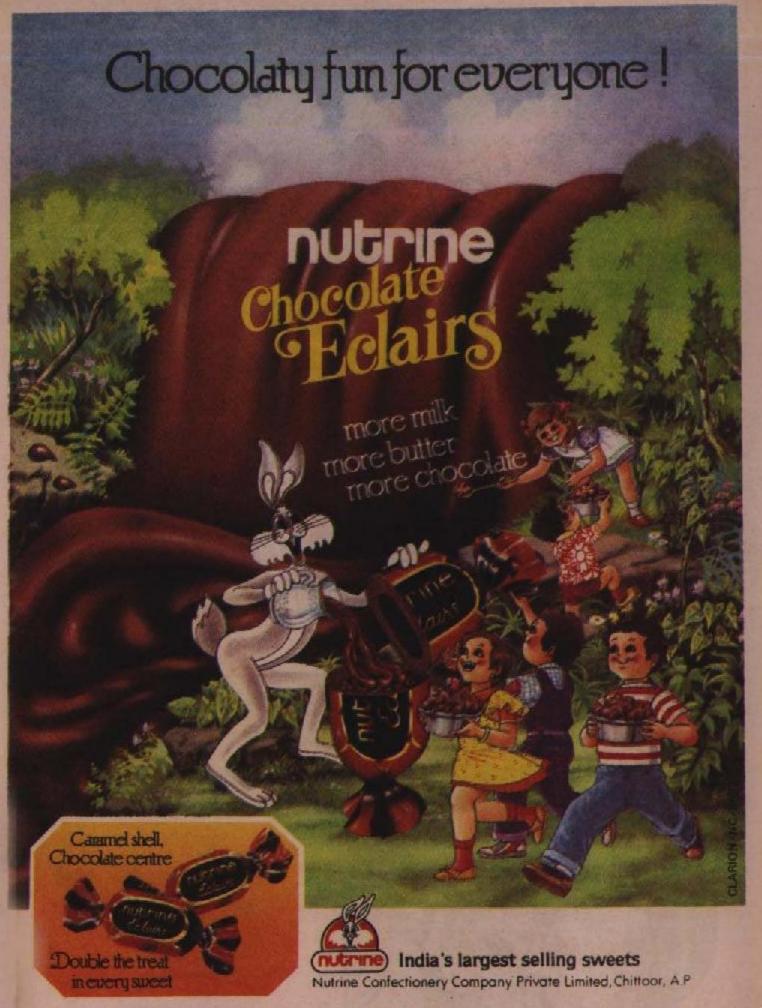




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